

Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion

**CNPP**

**Center for  
Nutrition Policy  
and Promotion**

Strategic Plan for  
FY 2002-2007

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## OVERVIEW

### ***MISSION STATEMENT***

To improve the health of Americans by developing and promoting dietary guidance that links scientific research to the nutrition needs of consumers

### ***VISION STATEMENT***

Improved nutrition and well-being of Americans

### ***GOALS***

Advance and promote food and nutrition guidance for all Americans

Use policy-focused analyses to advance nutrition and consumer economic knowledge

### ***KEY OUTCOMES***

Develop and promote food and nutrition guidance materials

Conduct applied nutrition and consumer economic research



## INTRODUCTION

The Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP) was established in December 1994 pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding between two mission areas in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA): (1) Research, Education, and Economics and (2) Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services. CNPP strives to further the USDA's goal to "improve the Nation's nutrition and health." USDA promotes America's health through food and nutrition education, guidance, and promotion to the general public and to targeted groups. It does so by teaching, informing and motivating Americans to use this information to improve their diets and physical activity patterns. CNPP furthers this goal by developing and promoting science-based dietary guidance and economic information for the public, which includes consumers and professionals in health, education, industry, and the media.

A multidisciplinary organization, CNPP consists of nutritionists, economists, dietitians, and nutrition educators. CNPP develops integrated nutrition research, education, and promotion programs and is a recognized authority for providing science-based dietary guidance for the American public and for policy development. CNPP leverages its small staff of 24.32 Staff Years by working effectively with policymakers, academic professionals, the media, and other information multipliers to improve the diet and health of the American public.

CNPP's mission is critically important, because poor diet and lack of physical activity are significant contributing factors in 4 of the 10 leading causes of death in the United States. Heart disease, certain types of cancer, stroke, and diabetes account for 1.4 million deaths annually—as well as impair quality of life and result in lost productivity. Diet also adversely influences such disorders as obesity, hypertension, and osteoporosis. Altogether, diet-linked diseases account for an estimated \$200 billion each year in increased medical costs and lost productivity.

An agency of the Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services, CNPP focuses on developing and promoting dietary guidance to all Americans. CNPP strives to improve the American diet through its involvement in issuing the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Food Guide Pyramid, which CNPP continues to maintain and further develop. By issuing and monitoring the Healthy Eating Index—the only Federal index of overall diet quality—CNPP also tracks the quality of the American diet. By using these tools and others, CNPP seeks to define, coordinate, and strengthen nutrition education policy within the USDA and to translate nutrition

research into easy-to-follow information and materials for the benefit of consumers; policymakers; and professionals in health, education, industry, and the media.

CNPP's contribution to improving consumer economic well-being is also important: about 14 percent of Americans have incomes that fall below the poverty threshold. The percentage for children is even higher—about one in five children live in poor households, and single mothers and their children make up a large proportion of poor households. Many poor people rely on the Food Stamp Program to keep from going hungry. By maintaining the Thrifty Food Plan, the basis for food stamp allotments, CNPP ensures that a nutritious diet is possible if adequate food stamps are available. CNPP's Expenditures on Children project is used to determine child support for families and to set foster care payments.

The mission and goals of CNPP are implicitly authorized by several legislative acts. The Organic Act of 1862 established the Department of Agriculture. It was amended in 1977 to include "human nutrition" as a subject area. In addition, the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 identified USDA as the lead agency in the Federal Government for food and agricultural sciences, including human nutrition. Finally, the National Nutrition Monitoring and Related Research Act of 1990 mandated joint release of the Dietary Guidelines every 5 years by USDA and HHS (Department of Health and Human Services) and joint review of all Federal nutrition education materials for the public to ensure their consistency with the Guidelines.

CNPP contributes directly to achievement of the USDA's Strategic Plan for 2002-2007 through Objective 4.2: "Promote Healthier Eating Habits and Lifestyles." CNPP will help to promote America's health through food and nutrition education, guidance, and promotion to the general public and to targeted groups. CNPP will also help to inform and motivate Americans to use this information to improve their diets and physical activity patterns.

**GOAL 1:  
ADVANCE AND PROMOTE FOOD AND NUTRITION GUIDANCE  
FOR ALL AMERICANS**

CNPP supports and promotes the health of all Americans by producing and promoting up-to-date science-based dietary guidance, including the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Food Guide Pyramid. Title 3 of the National Nutrition Monitoring and Related Research Act of 1990 requires the Secretaries of Agriculture and Health and Human Services to publish jointly

every 5 years the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The Dietary Guidelines are the cornerstone of Federal nutrition policy for the general public. The guidelines provide sound scientific advice for healthy Americans age 2 years and over on food choices that promote health and help prevent disease. The latest edition of the Dietary Guidelines was released in May 2000, and the next revision is scheduled for release in 2005. CNPP serves as Co-Executive Secretary for developing the Dietary Guidelines and is the lead Federal unit responsible for producing and promoting the bulletin *Nutrition and Your Health: Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

USDA also has a rich history, dating back to the early 1900's, of producing food guides for consumers. The current food guide is graphically depicted by the Food Guide Pyramid, which was released in 1992. The Pyramid illustrates USDA's research-based food guidance system that translates nutrient recommendations into recommendations on food intake and provides a framework for selecting the kind and amount of foods to provide a nutritionally adequate diet. As nutritional standards such as the Dietary Reference Intakes and the Dietary Guidelines are updated, Pyramid recommendations need to be reassessed and revised to ensure that they continue to be scientifically sound, appropriate, and useful to the public. In 2000, the CNPP began a broad-based reassessment of the Food Guide Pyramid in light of changes in nutritional standards, food consumption patterns, and food composition, and to ensure that consumers can better understand and use its messages.

CNPP promotes dietary guidance by providing information directly to consumers via publications and the Web, as well as by working with intermediary groups, information multipliers, nutrition educators, the media, and others to develop and deliver science-based messages and materials for all Americans. To encourage other public and private groups to develop and use nutrition guidance materials that are consistent with the Dietary Guidelines, CNPP fosters public/private partnerships. This effort leverages the limited resources available to CNPP and broadens the reach of these consistent, reliable nutrition education messages.

It is essential that dietary guidance for the American public, which is issued by Federal agencies, be trustworthy and reliable. CNPP plays a key role in helping to ensure this consistency. The National Nutrition Monitoring and Related Research Act requires that any Federal agency proposing to issue such guidance to the general public must submit it for review by the Secretaries of Agriculture and Health and Human Services to ensure that it is consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Through the Dietary Guidance Working Group, chaired by CNPP, and in collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services' Nutrition

Policy Board and Committee on Dietary Guidance, CNPP facilitates the review and release of Federal dietary guidance materials.

Advancing food and nutrition guidance is an ongoing activity that evolves with changes in scientific knowledge, nutritional recommendations, food consumption patterns, food composition, and food marketing techniques. Effective promotion of food and nutrition guidance is also a continual activity that depends heavily on the availability of resources to conduct consumer research, to design and develop state-of-the-art nutrition education materials, and to use innovative delivery channels.

## **KEY OUTCOME 1: DEVELOP AND PROMOTE FOOD AND NUTRITION GUIDANCE MATERIALS**

CNPP is charged with developing and promoting dietary guidance materials for nutrition and health professionals and consumers. As the lead unit for publication of the Dietary Guidelines bulletin and for other nutritional guidance materials such as the Food Guide Pyramid, CNPP measures performance in achieving Key Outcome 1 by the release and use of these important nutrition guidance documents.

### ***Performance Measures***

#### **Release of Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the updated Food Guide Pyramid**

***Baseline:***

The 5<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans was released in 2000.

***Target:***

Release 6<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Guidelines in 2005.

***Baseline:***

The Food Guide Pyramid was released in 1992.

***Target:***

Release the updated Food Guide Pyramid materials in 2005.

#### **Use of dietary guidance materials by consumers and professionals**

***Baseline:***

773,000 downloads and 513,000 hard copies of guidance materials in 2001.

***Target:***

Increase of 100% in downloads of guidance materials from the

Web and increase of 25% in total distribution of dietary guidance materials by 2007.

**Baseline:**

About 450,000 visitor sessions in 2002 to the Interactive Healthy Eating Index (IHEI) at [www.cnpp.usda.gov](http://www.cnpp.usda.gov). This baseline represents any visitor sessions to the IHEI, whether or not one or more individuals use the same IP address to assess the IHEI.

**Target:**

Continue to enhance the IHEI Website; by 2005, increase visitor sessions to 475,000; by 2007, 500,000.

**Actionable Strategies**

- Prepare, publish, and promote the Dietary Guidelines for Americans in cooperation with the Department of Health and Human Services.
- Reassess the Food Guide Pyramid through technical and consumer research, and revise recommendations and materials as needed to reflect updated nutritional standards and food consumption patterns and increase the usefulness of these materials to the public.
- Conduct and report technical and consumer research that will help guide the development of nutrition education messages and materials and nutrition promotion initiatives.
- Develop nutrition education materials, including Web-based interactive tools to help consumers assess and, if necessary, improve their diet.
- Build collaborative partnerships for developing and delivering nutrition promotion programs and materials that leverage limited CNPP resources.
- Chair the USDA Dietary Guidance Working Group, which reviews USDA and dietary guidance materials to ensure consistency with the Dietary Guidelines.
- Update the IHEI Website periodically to reflect updated nutritional standards and dietary guidance and to add a physical activity module.

**GOAL 2: USE POLICY-FOCUSED ANALYSES TO ADVANCE NUTRITION AND CONSUMER ECONOMIC KNOWLEDGE**

CNPP maintains the four official USDA Food Plans (Thrifty, Low Cost, Moderate Cost, and Liberal). These plans represent nutritious diets at various cost levels. The Thrifty Food Plan serves as the basis for food stamp allotments; in FY 2002 about 8.2 million households received food stamps. The Low-Cost Food Plan is used by bankruptcy courts in determining the amount of a bankruptee's

income to be set aside for food expenses. The other two food plans are used by the U.S. Department of Defense in setting military food allotments, as well as by courts in setting alimony payments. Analyses are needed to ensure that the USDA Food Plans meet current dietary recommendations and reflect the most current costs.

Data used for the Food Plans are from the USDA's Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals and the U.S. Department of Labor's Consumer Price Index.

CNPP also maintains USDA's Expenditures on Children project. For the past 40 years, USDA has published annual estimates of family expenditures on children. States use these expense estimates to set child support guidelines and foster care payments. Almost half of all children in the United States will spend some part of their childhood living with a single parent; half a million children are in the foster care system. The annual estimates of expenses on children are necessary to ensure the economic well-being of these children. Analyses are needed periodically to make sure that the child-expense estimates are based on current expenditure patterns and reflect the most recent costs. Data used for the estimates are from the U.S. Department of Labor's Consumer Expenditure Survey and Consumer Price Index.

The Healthy Eating Index (HEI), developed by CNPP to assess the nutritional status of Americans, is a summary measure of the quality of people's overall diets. Its most recent update was based on data from Health and Human Services' 1999-2000 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. The HEI continues to provide nutrition educators and policymakers with information on aspects of the diet that needs improvement. In 2000, CNPP developed the Web-based Interactive Healthy Eating Index (IHEI) that allows people to assess their diets and receive nutrition education messages. About 2500 people each day use the IHEI. Ongoing revisions are needed to ensure that the HEI continues to reflect current dietary recommendations. In addition, periodic enhancements to the IHEI make it more easily accessible and enhance its uses.

Since 1909, USDA has published the Nutrient Content of the U.S. Food Supply—a report that provides economists, nutritionists, and public health policymakers with estimates of food supply nutrients available for consumption on a per person basis. This report provides information on the potential of the food supply (1) to meet the nutritional needs of the U.S. population and (2) to evaluate changes in the American diet over time. Nutrient data used for this report are from the USDA's Nutrient Data Base (Nutrient Data Laboratory, Agricultural Research Service); per capita consumption estimates by commodity are from USDA's Economic Research

Service. In 2000, CNPP developed a Web-based Interactive Food Supply that allows the user to calculate food supply nutrients and related information, such as nutrient fortification and estimates of the food group servings (per person) of the Food Guide Pyramid that are available for consumption. Ongoing analyses are needed to guarantee that the nutrient content of the food supply is based on the most current information available.

The *Family Economics and Nutrition Review* (FENR) provides science-based nutrition and consumer economic information to the American public. First published in 1943, FENR is a resource for professionals, policymakers, the media, and the general public (subscribers as well as Web users). This scientific journal publishes research articles and briefs, CNPP's *Nutrition Insights*, and regular features—including the USDA Food Plans and research and evaluation activities.

## **KEY OUTCOME 2: CONDUCT APPLIED NUTRITION AND CONSUMER ECONOMIC RESEARCH**

CNPP will continue to advance nutrition and consumer economic knowledge by conducting applied research regarding people's food and nutrition behavior and nutritional status, cost of a nutritious diet at various levels, and expenditures on children.

### ***Performance Measure***

#### **Update of USDA food plans, Expenditures on Children by Families, Healthy Eating Index, and Nutrient Content of the U.S. Food Supply, as well as Disseminate General Analyses of Food, Nutrition, and Economic Issues**

##### ***Baselines:***

Thrifty Food Plan based on 1989-91 data; Low-Cost Plan, Moderate-Cost Plan, and Liberal Food Plan based on 1989-91 data; publication of the 2001 Expenditures on Children by Families report in 2002; publication of the 1999-2000 Healthy Eating Index report in 2002; publication of the 1909-2000 Nutrient Content of the U.S. Food Supply report in 2003.

##### ***Targets:***

All Food Plans based on 1999-2002 data in 2007; publication of the 2002 Expenditures on Children by Families report by 2003 and annually thereafter; publication of the 2001-2003 Healthy Eating Index report by 2005; publication of the 1909-2000 Food Supply report by 2003 and the 1909-2001 Food Supply Report by 2004, followed by yearly updates and distribution to users at professional conferences and via CNPP distribution list and Web page.

**Baselines:**

Promote nutrition and economic research in FENR; 46,000 downloads; promote FENR via the Government Printing Office in 2002.

**Targets:**

Publish FENR twice a year, with the following as targets for each fiscal year: 50,000 downloads and subscriptions by 2005 and 60,000 by 2007; promote FENR in at least one new market during each year.

**Actionable Strategies**

- Maintain and update the
  - USDA Food Plans to ensure allotments of food stamps and other uses of the plans are based on the most current assessments of food costs, dietary recommendations, and food consumption behavior.
  - Expenditures on Children by Families project to make sure that child support guidelines and foster care payments reflect the most recent prices.
  - HEI and its Web version to provide policymakers with the most recent information on the quality of the American diet and to make sure consumers are able to access information based on the most recent dietary recommendations and nutritional standards.
  - Nutrient Content of U.S. Food Supply series to provide policymakers and other with the most recent information on nutrients available for consumption in the United States.
- Use the most current data and methods to ensure that policymakers and professionals have the latest research regarding nutrition and consumer economics.
- Publish FENR twice each year; promote to various audiences so that they have some of the latest research related to nutrition and consumer economics.

**PARTNERSHIPS AND COORDINATION**

To leverage Government resources and provide cost-effective nutrition guidance that promotes a healthful diet for Americans, CNPP maintains strong ties with many Federal agencies, the food industry, academic institutions, professional organizations, and a variety of other groups (including health and public interest organizations). Within USDA, CNPP works with numerous partner agencies, including the Food and Nutrition Service; Economic

Research Service; Agricultural Research Service; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; Forest Service, and Food Safety and Inspection Service.

Positioned as it is within the mission area of Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services, CNPP serves uniquely as a liaison between the USDA's research and extension capacity and its nutrition and food assistance policy and program implementation. In addition, CNPP's multidisciplinary staff members collaborate with staff in other Federal agencies, such as the National Cancer Institute and its 5 A Day for Better Health Program, the Health and Human Services' Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, and the Food and Drug Administration. CNPP also maintains links with the private sector through public/private partnerships such as the Dietary Guidelines Alliance.

## **LINKAGE OF GENERAL GOAL TO ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLAN**

Each performance target in CNPP's Strategic Plan for 2002-2007 will be supported by one or more performance measures in the CNPP's Performance Plans for fiscal years 2002-2007. CNPP will develop a detailed plan that shows the relationships between target measures and performance measures.

## **RESOURCES NEEDED**

CNPP's ability to improve the health and well-being of Americans depends on the resources available for this purpose. Accomplishment of objectives presupposes continued CNPP funding necessary to perform these functions. Public and private partnerships are, as well, necessary to leverage these resources.

## **KEY EXTERNAL FACTORS**

Developments in medical and other scientific knowledge regarding diet and health—as well as changes in human nutrition standards, food consumption, food composition, and food marketing—can profoundly affect CNPP's strategic plan for accomplishing its mission of developing and promoting science-based dietary guidance and economic information. For example, changes in Dietary Reference Intakes (formerly Recommended Dietary Allowances) for macronutrients and essential micronutrients could affect the recommendations of the Food Guide Pyramid—the popular and widely recognized guide to daily food choices. Also, because CNPP depends on data collected by national surveys, its work will be affected greatly if the results from these surveys were not available in a timely fashion. These surveys include the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (conducted by

Health and Human Services), the Consumer Expenditure Survey (Bureau of Labor Statistics), and per capita estimates of food available for consumption (Economic Research Service).

To mitigate the effect of these key factors, CNPP has developed procedures to accommodate possible changes in nutrition standards into a planned reassessment and update of the Food Guide Pyramid. Also, the surveys that CNPP uses are the best available for the type of research needed to link nutrition to the needs of consumers. Should a survey become unavailable, CNPP will seek other sources, some of which may come from private industry. CNPP will also attempt to ensure that any alternate surveys used have representative samples of the U.S. population.

## DATA QUALITY

The National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey provides estimates of diseases and risk factors, reference distribution of selected health parameters, trends in selected diseases, and information about disease etiology and the natural history of selected diseases. The Dietary Data Collection system of the survey is used to collect 24-hour recalls. The sample (about 30,000 people 2 months old and over) for a 6-year period (1988-1994) was chosen from randomly selected and nationally representative households.

The Consumer Expenditure Survey collects information on the buying habits of American consumers. The data are collected in independent quarterly interview and weekly diary surveys of about 5000 sample households, which are representative of the U.S. population. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that 95 percent of expenditures are covered in its interview survey. (This survey includes global estimates of expenditures for food at home and food away from home.)

The food supply data series calculates the amount of food available in the United States for consumption on a per capita basis. The components of the series—sum of production, beginning inventories, and net imports—are either directly measurable or are estimated by Government agencies (including Economic Research Service). Data for this series come from the National Agricultural Statistics Service, the Census Bureau, the Agricultural Marketing Service, and trade associations. Although the series has some limitations, it is the only source of time-series data on food and nutrient availability in the country.

## STRATEGIC CONSULTATIONS

Strategic Consultations			
Key Outcomes	Date	Who	Purpose
1	September 1998–February 2000	Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee	Review 1995 Dietary Guidelines for Americans in light of current scientific and medical knowledge. Recommend changes.
	Ongoing	USDA Dietary Guidance Working Group and DHHS Nutrition Policy Board Committee on Dietary Guidance	To ensure consistency with the Dietary Guidelines of Federal nutrition education materials for the public.

## CROSS-CUTTING PROGRAMS

Cross-Cutting Programs		
Key Outcomes	USDA Primary Agencies	External Organizations
1 & 2	Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; Economic Research Service; Agricultural Research Service; Food and Nutrition Service; Forest Service; National Agricultural Library	Department of Health and Human Services, Dietary Guidelines Alliance, professional organizations, health and public interest organizations, private voluntary organizations, academic institutions, research community